

Dear Judge Simon,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendments to the Police Accountability Commission (PAC). My name is Celeste Noche, and I am a photojournalist and the founder of Portland in Color, a community organization dedicated to supporting BIPOC creatives in our city. As someone deeply involved in documenting and supporting our community, I feel compelled to voice my concerns regarding these amendments.

In November 2020, the people of Portland overwhelmingly supported Measure 26-217, which established a new police oversight board with the power to investigate complaints against the Portland Police Bureau and to impose disciplinary actions, including termination. This measure was a crucial step toward holding law enforcement accountable and ensuring that our community's concerns are addressed.

However, the recent actions by the City of Portland undermine the very purpose of this measure. The amendments proposed by the city council and the mayor, which were approved in November 2023, severely weaken the power and independence of the PAC. By allowing law enforcement to have a say in the nominating committee and by imposing vague and subjective restrictions on who can serve on the board, these amendments effectively strip the PAC of its ability to function as an independent body.

The amendments also perpetuate systemic bias and trauma by forcing community members to participate in ridealongs and by removing their ability to appeal decisions, while allowing officers multiple avenues for appeal. This imbalance further undermines the board's authority and effectiveness, leaving our community vulnerable to the very issues that the PAC was created to address.

As someone who has witnessed and documented the impact of police actions on our community, I am deeply concerned that these amendments will not only fail to address the issues identified by the Department of Justice but will also erode the trust that our community has in the oversight process. These amendments are neither "fair, adequate, nor reasonable," and they do not reflect the will of the people who voted for a stronger, more accountable police oversight system.

I urge you, Judge Simon, to reject these amendments and to ensure that the PAC remains a powerful and independent body capable of holding law enforcement accountable. The people of Portland deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Celeste Noche  
Photojournalist and Founder, Portland in Color